

ROAD! ALERT!

**HARVEST
CAMPAIGNS
ROUND-UP...**
aka RA! Newsletter No.4
September 1995

WELLS UNDER ATTACK

England's smallest city under the bulldozer... We can still stop them!

Just before work began on the £14 million Wells "Relief" Road, a local community poll found that 55% opposed the road. Despite this Somerset County Council have arrogantly and unlawfully pressed on with the road - but also unleashed an impassioned direct action campaign.

The scheme is a route for quarry lorries so they can rip up more of the Mendip Hills, and get the rock out more quickly, to build more roads elsewhere. It goes around Wells, Britain's smallest Cathedral city, trashing 2 school playing fields, bringing traffic fumes closer to children, on the way. The justification for this is to "relieve" the town of congestion, ignoring

the SACTRA report that says that the road will just generate the traffic it is designed to relieve.

Tree-cutting started in April when the Council sneaked in to fell the Cathedral School yews. Advance (trashing) work by **Oswalls** started in earnest at Dulcote on 12 June. Since then the powerful combination of experienced activists and local residents has confronted the bulldozers together. The Save Our Space local group has also ferociously sought a Judicial Review, as the Council have crashed ahead without proper planning permission for the road.

Progress on the road has been slow with **Christiani & Nielsen** starting the main contract in late June, bringing **Reliance**

Security with them. Frequent actions have resulted in CJA arrests. Activists also squatted a youth centre on the route in July, although it was recently taken back by security guards and demolished.

The main action, however, started on 19 July when bulldozers arrived to strip the playing fields at the Blue School. They didn't bank on 200 schoolchildren coming out, ripping down the security fences and stopping the diggers! People are still really needed to hold back the work (it's barely started). Donations are also very welcome.

SAVE OUR SPACE : c/o West Side Bookshop, Sadler Street, WELLS, BA5 2SE. Camp mobiles: 0585 106615/116620. Or: 01749 880639.

T As RA13 went to press, the campaign against the **A299 THANET WAY** Euroroute in north Kent was just starting. Much has happened since then....

H The Thanet Way Action Tribe has been fighting the destruction since early May, but contractors **Kier/Hochtief** are still trashing woods, an Iron Age site, the world's oldest railway bridge, and much more. The energy of campaigners, often few in number, has made life difficult for the roadbuilders of Kent County Council.

A The campaign has also shown resistance to the Criminal Justice Act, with around 60 CJA arrests so far. A CJA-defying Action Weekend in August went very well. We printed 8000 flyers, but only 50 people showed up; but work was stopped and machinery chased off. After an acoustic gig in the evening, United Systems smuggled in a PA, and 300 dancers crossed the line to become "criminals", till the blue meanies pooped the party.

N Of an original 6 squats, none now remain, with the campaign recently losing "Highpoint" and the WWII bunker site (evicted under "rave" sections of the CJA, although there were no sound systems for miles around!). There is still the last woodland on route to protect; tree-people come hither!

E **SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE THANET WAY! Contact us at : 88 Lucerne Drive, SEASALTER, near Whitstable, Kent, CT5 4SB. Office phone : 01227 275404.**

**W
A
Y**

NO M66!

The No M66 Campaign began on July 9 when a protest picnic turned into a camp at Daisy Nook Country Park on the Oldham-Ashton border in Greater Manchester; a local protest against this £10 million Denton-Middleton final link in the Manchester Outer Ring Road.

The road would destroy the narrow band of greenery between East Manchester and the towns of Middleton, Oldham, Ashton and Denton including a reservoir, sites of biological importance at Daisy Nook and market gardens and allotment land at Littlemoors.

Most of this part of the M66 is to be built in cutting - supposedly to reduce noise and air pollution. What this actually means is the creation of millions of tons of spoil, to be dumped on other green open spaces in the area. Related campaigns exist to save these open spaces at Beal Valley, Oldham and Rooley Moor, Rochdale.

Actions are frequent, with 40 people, mainly locals on their first action, recently closing down all of one worksite for most of the day.

A squat at **22a Lumb Lane, Droylsden, Tameside, G. Manchester** (please write!), which is on the route, will open in early September as a campaign office. There is a mix of residents, with a wealth of local knowledge, and experienced road protesters on this campaign, but we do need more people with experience to leave the cosy South and get up North! Plans are in hand for actions the like of which have never been seen before. People with legal expertise are also needed.

**CONTACT: 0161 627 4862 or 0161 628 4727.
No M66 c/o 14 Eton Avenue, OLDHAM, OL8 4HR**

GREETINGS.....

This Road Alert! newsletter is only a quarter of the usual size - which means there's less info in it, and no nice pictures, but it also means it's a lot easier for YOU to photocopy and distribute. This comes to you with the help of Friends of the Earth, who are sending details of the Road Traffic Reduction Bill to the RA! mailing list (as a one-off). We aim to produce another 16-page newsletter in the late Autumn.

On the subject of things we aim to produce.....apologies to everyone who has asked for a copy of "The Compleat Anti-Road Protestor" action pack. It should appear sometime before the end of the millennium - apparently Nostradamus predicted it - so please be patient! If you've sent a cheque etc. and are fed up of waiting, let us know and we'll refund you.

Things are hectic here in Newbury, with Mawhinney's announcement in July (see p.3) finally confirming that his calls for "debate" were a total sham as far as direct action groups are concerned. (Although RA! are based in Newbury, we are NOT the local campaign; please contact the Third Battle of Newbury first for campaign info.) Protests continue to spread and diversify on all levels - PRESSURE ON!

ROAD ALERT! PO Box 5544 NEWBURY RG14 5FB

Tel 01635 521770 Fax 01635 521660 e-mail <roadalert@gn.apc.org>

....ACTION NEWS....

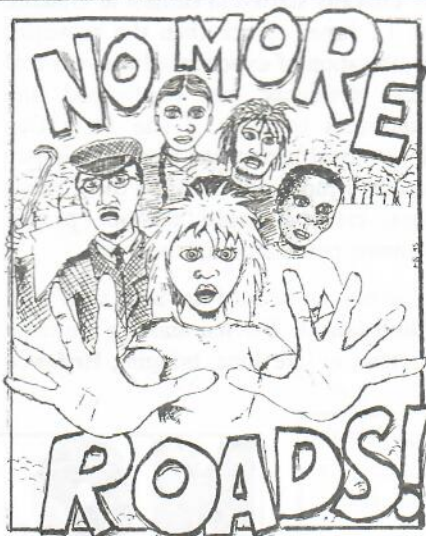
Grimsby doesn't smell fishy, but its **PEAKES PARKWAY** road plan does. 275 people gathered in Grimsby's peoples' park in August - kids, parents, long standing campaigners and new radicals - to drum and shout their objections. Get in a **STROPP** (Stop the Road On Peakes Parkway) and support the campaign! Contact 01472 277358

Brayford Road Action Group (BRAG) temporarily occupied a building due for demolition for the nasty **BRAYFORD FLYOVER** in Lincoln, with CJA arrests. Further actions are planned. BRAG's motto "Bike It!" is something the DoT could learn from. Contact 01522 524583

The 7-hour eviction of "Munstonia", the very last house on the route of the infamous **M11 LINK** in East London, happened on 20 June. The GreenMania camp looks vulnerable and may be evicted soon. Help! Direct action every Monday and Friday. Contact 0181 527 4896.

Tree-sitters have been living in historic Queen Anne's Ride in **WINDSOR GREAT PARK** since early August, to stop Prince Philip destroying 300-year old oaks. The crazy royal plan is to "tidy" the landscape, to the dismay of conservation groups - the oaks are of huge value for rare wildlife. The squatters will stay in the trees until ludicrous Phil sees sense. It could be some time..... Contact via RA!

WHATLEY QUARRY - an application to expand this horrific Mendip quarry could be re-approved. Actions happen occasionally. Contact via RA!



Since the Stanworth Valley eviction, as RA!3 went to press, the **M65** campaign in Lancashire has been quieter.....but a farmer on route recently refused to yield to Compulsory Purchase Orders, and barricaded his barn! Get up there now and support the frequent actions. Contact 0161 231 4812, or via RA!

DERBY SOUTHERN BYPASS - Occasional actions against this huge £120 million road go on. Contact RA!

There has been an explosion of activity against **OPEN CAST MINING** in South Wales, Leeds and Gateshead. Selar SSSI in South Wales has seen the most spirited resistance to this land-rape with tree villages and full-on community involvement in the campaign. Trees still need defending. Contact 01222 363383.

The tree-pixies are preparing a **TREE DWELLERS GUIDE**, about everything to do with living in and with trees. It needs your input - send ideas, queries, poems, stories etc. to....Tree Dwellers Guide, c/o Aardvark Centre, 115 Alcester Road, Moseley, Birmingham.

An Action Weekend at **SOLSBURY HILL** near Bath on the 11-14 August re-kindled opposition to the nightmare Euroroute. There are also plans to dump spoil from the road on a reservoir which is a valuable bird habitat. Contact 01225 448556 for info on Solsbury Hill and other actions in the South-West.

The local campaign against the **COVENTRY NORTH-SOUTH LINK ROAD**, blighting the Stoke district, needs support. Contact 0973 241520; PO Box 121, Coventry, CV1 5DA.

ALARM UK - This, the umbrella organisation for local anti-road groups, have moved to : South Bank House, Black Prince Road, London, SE1 7SJ. Tel / Fax 0171 582 9279.

POLLOK FREE STATE, which celebrated its anniversary in August, is the only camp remaining on the M77 road route in Glasgow. Actions have continued, with increased involvement from people living on the run-down local estates who will suffer the air pollution from the new M77. Glasgow has also seen an explosion of anti-traffic and CJA actions. Contact 0141 226 5066.

TWYFORD INJUNCTION - it's finally all over - well, sort of... the DoT have dropped the £3.5 million damages case but a Judge ruled that 48 people pay £500 each towards the DoT's £500,000 legal costs. Can't pay, won't pay!

If you want to be REALLY up on what is going on direct-action-wise all over the country, then get an audience together and show them the latest **CONSCIOUS CINEMA** video. This vid-news comes out monthly and is inspirational. Contact 01273 679544. **UNDERCURRENTS 3** is out now too. Contact Smallworld on 01865 712521. (Quote ref. A4101.)

Third Battle of Newbury

Major changes since RA! 3... the A34 NEWBURY BYPASS was put on hold last December, for a year long review. Local and national environment groups used this opportunity to start producing a package of traffic management alternatives to the dinosaur road scheme. However, in a two-fingered salute to their efforts, the then Transport Secretary, Brian Mawhinney, gave the shock go-ahead for the road only 7 months into the year "review" period. Just 30 minutes later he ran off to become Tory Party Chairman. So much for his Great Transport Debate!

An alliance of groups are trying desperately to stop the road, with good reason. If it goes ahead it'll trash 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's - Snelsmore Common and Rivers Kennet and Lambourn) a fourth proposed SSSI, 2 civil war battlefields, ancient woodlands, the habitats of kingfishers, bats, dormice, badgers, hobbies (all "protected" species), Stone Age

archaeological sites, nature reserves, and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is even more destructive than Twyford Down. Can you believe it? Just 3 years and 30 miles up the road and they haven't learnt.

If the road goes ahead, however, the protests will be even larger than those at Twyford.... Whilst busy preparing for direct action, there is also much hope of stopping this road before destruction starts. When you receive this, the EC will be about to start formal proceedings against the Government for breaching THREE Environmental Directives and for failing (again) to do an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Friends of the Earth have commissioned a professional report into alternatives that will be published mid-Sept and should show local people that the road wouldn't work.

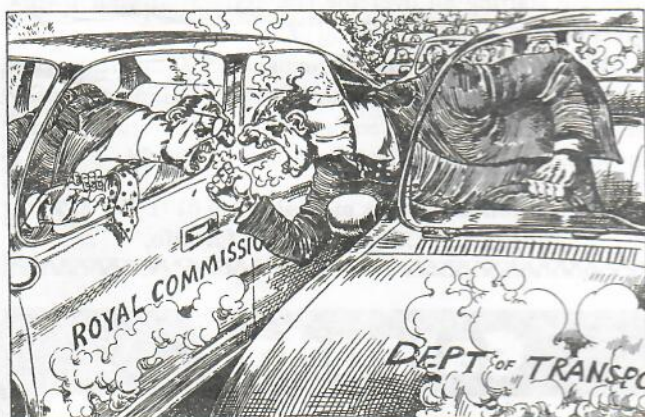
The main contract to build the road has been put out to tender instead of being awarded straight away to Costain. This should take another 6 months and will push the scheme into the next financial year....**However, we are still on total red alert.** There are several

preliminary (TRASHING) contracts which could start ANY time. Two beautiful camps are set up on route, with more needed to cover the 9 miles. Tunnels have been dug at the Snelsmore camp, and treehouses go up daily.

Good communications and a healthy respect exist between all different strands of the campaign, creating an unstoppable force. Local people walk the route every morning before work to check for bulldozers and a rapid response telephone tree is in place.

This is a road we HAVE to stop - it can be, with huge national support. Sign the Beat the Bulldozer Pledge, get on the national phone tree and be there! (see contact details below). If you haven't already, please also write to Sir George Young (The new Transport Secretary - House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA) asking him never to build this road and to look at alternatives. What better place than Newbury to start radically reducing traffic, instead of catering for it? How about that for a debate?

NB: NEW THIRD BATTLE OFFICE
Tel: 01635 45544. Fax 01635 45545
PO Box 5520, NEWBURY, Berkshire,
RG14 7YW.



REMEMBER THE PRISONERS!

We called for support for remand prisoner **Jim Chambers** in RA!3. The bad news is that he was convicted in July, along with fellow M11-er **Stuart Edwards**, of alleged criminal damage to a construction site. Jim is likely to be in for about three more months, Stuart for eight. **PLEASE SEND LETTERS OF SUPPORT**, however brief, be positive and informative, but remember that ALL mail is read and vetted by the authorities.

Write NOW to Stuart Edwards (PB1864) and Jim Chambers (PV2504), both in HMP PENTONVILLE, CALEDONIAN ROAD, LONDON, N7 8TT.

A30 ROAD CAMPAIGN - THE PLOT THICKENS.....

Since May, the camps opposing the A30 Honiton-Exeter DBFO nightmare have continued to entrench their positions and expand. We took a new site - TROLLHEIM - just after Beltane (May 1st). It is a hillfort built from trees felled by contractors on the proposed route. The "Trolls" in the hillfort want to defend the scar cut through Big Wood, especially as huge numbers of oak saplings have sprung up in recent months. Visitors, including kids, are welcome - help is needed with battlement building, trenching, potato-peeling, gardening etc.

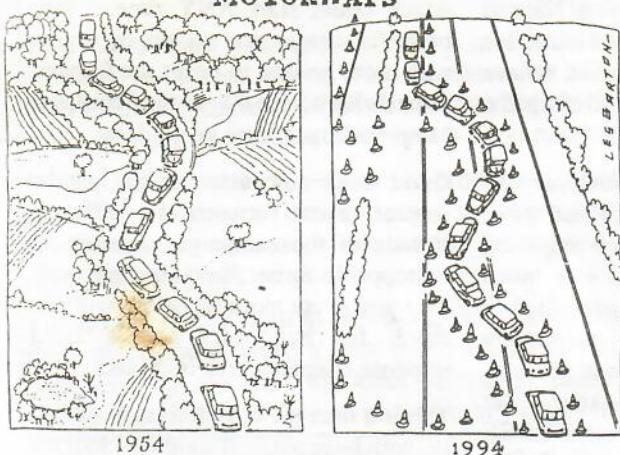
Over the valley at the FAIRMILE camp, work continues. Tree-houses and "twigloos" spring up weekly. As befits a site dubbed "the university of road protesting", people are always on hand to teach newcomers to climb the extensive network of walkways of

the tree-village. The most recent development is the tunnel system being dug beneath the camp - an ever-growing labyrinth created by hobbits, dwarves and miners. Diggers, bucketeers and tea-makers needed on a 24-hour basis!

The contractor which finally signs this private finance DBFO contract will have a rough ride! The main needs for all three camps (Fairmile, Allercombe and Trollheim) are: more people, rope, tools, climbing gear, solid wood doors, and vegan cake.

CONTACT Quercus Tribe / A30 Action! at their NEW address: PO Box 6, OTTERY ST. MARY, Devon, EX11 1YL. Phones : 01404 815729 (Office); 0385 278157 / 278156 (Camp mobiles). Contact RA! for "DBFO" info.

MOTORWAYS



1954

1994

Road Alert! - What, how and why?

Road Alert! is an information network for peaceful direct action protests against roadbuilding. RA! sprang up after the protests at Twyford Down and we have since witnessed local communities nationwide take on the roadbuilders. Road building is slowly grinding to a halt. RA! exists to support grass-roots groups and activists in taking action and starting new campaigns against roads and car-culture. Get stuck in!

We produce irregular newsletters, like this, and also weekly bulletins which are sent to network centres and put onto the Internet (GreenNet/UseNet conference "uk.environment"). Contact us if you want to receive these by e-mail.

The RA! office is run by volunteers and funded ENTIRELY by donations, which are used to ensure that our service remains free to all. All the campaigns also run on a shoestring - if you can't get directly involved, cash is always welcome as campaigns are invariably skint!

If you think you aren't on the Road Alert! database and you want to be (or want to be taken off) then send us your details, as below.....

- ☐ Please add me/us to the RA! mailing list
- ☐ Please amend my details as below
- ☐ Here's a donation of £..... (optional!)

Name.....

Group.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Phone/fax.....

e-mail.....

Skills to offer.....

Witty comments, etc.....

Road Alert!, PO Box 5544, Newbury, RG14 5FB

"SPOKES IN THE WHEEL OF REVOLT"

This summer has seen an upsurge of protest against car culture. The first Reclaim The Streets "street party" in May turned Camden's smog-filled High Street into a peoples' paradise....after two cars mysteriously collided to block the street, carpets covered the tarmac, a free food cafe gave it away, bands played, and thousands raved to a bicycle-powered sound system.

"Street Party II - The Sequel" on July 23 was a spectacular success - more than 2000 people "raved against the machine" in Islington, turning a 5-lane nightmare into an urban oasis. Scaffold tripods blocked side roads, huge banners ensured the message was clear, a tank pumped out repetitive beats, and kids played in a new sand pit, complete with paddling pool! Several hours later the party vanished as fast as it had appeared; apart from a press-hyped "riot" (ie. minor scuffles), an amazing time was had by all.

With the news dominated by smog in August, RTS acted where others stalled - blockading a main arterial route in congested Greenwich in the morning rush hour, with the ubiquitous tripods erected in seconds. Astonished police looked on, unable to do anything other than turn back cars as bikes whizzed through....

Critical Mass, the cyclist's carnival, has been growing throughout the summer, with over 1000 bikes bringing central London to a standstill. More and more Critical Mass rides are starting all over the country. Start your own! Street parties are also spreading nationwide, with blockades in Brighton, Oxford and Birmingham. The heat will continue into the Autumn with "Operation Gridlock Hush Hour", a blockade of several main London arterial routes, on Oct 2, and big plans for Manchester on Oct 21.

The RTS London office is moving; ring 0171 254 2290 / 0171 737 4320, or via RA! for info.



Calendar



September

- 9 Full Moon acoustic family gathering at the A30 camp at Fairmile, Devon. Info - 01404 815729.
- 9 Benefit gig, Thanet Way, Kent. Info - 01227 275404
- 22-24 Earth First! national gathering in Lancashire. Info - 0161 274 4665.
- 29-1 Oct Survival of the Tribes gathering and exhibition, Glastonbury. Info - 01458 834677.
- 29 Critical Mass bike rides. Info - 0171 254 2290

October

- 2 "Operation Gridlock" during Hush Hour in central London. Info - 0171 254 2290.
- 7-8 Land occupation, Oxford. Info - 01865 722016.
- 21 Street Party, Manchester. Info - 0161 232 1598.